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Philosophy

Saint Mary's College of California

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PHILOSOPHY

The Department of Philosophy provides an opportunity for every student to continue, in more structured, critical terms, the spontaneous inquiry into basic questions man has raised from the beginning of time—questions about himself, about God, about the world in which he lives, and the way in which he ought to live.

The word “philosophy” itself, love of wisdom, indicates that the search is not concerned with superficial explanations, but probes beyond appearances for fundamental principles and causes.

Hence courses are offered not only to satisfy a major but also to provide an opportunity for students who are interested in a closer examination of one or more areas of philosophical inquiry as a worthwhile supplement and broadening factor to their specialized field of study.

FACULTY

Patrick Downey, Ph.D., *Professor, Chair*
 Brother William Beatie, FSC, Ph.D., *Professor*
 Steven Cortright, M.A., *Professor*
 John A. Dragstedt, Ph.D., *Professor*
 Wayne H. Harter, Ph.D., *Associate Professor*
 Edward Porcella, Ph.D., *Associate Professor*

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Philosophy Department seeks to cultivate a unique virtue in its students and faculty. This intellectual virtue we have called the Philosophical Habit of Mind. It consists, at least, of the following abilities:

- An ability to situate oneself in the Western philosophical tradition of ethical and metaphysical questions and reasoning.
- An ability to account to oneself and to others for the bases of one's actions.
- An ability to reckon with the consequences of one's own and other's practical reasoning in various contexts, both personal and political.
- An ability to raise metaphysical questions in various concrete, lived, literary and political context.
- An ability to distinguish and relate the architectonic questions of metaphysics from and to the specialized questions of the sciences and other disciplines.
- An ability to discern the interconnection between various modes of ethical and political reflection and distinct metaphysical positions.
- An ability to pose to oneself the questions raised by the claims of the Christian faith on one's own ethical and metaphysical reasoning.
- An ability to read new or contemporary works in the ongoing tradition of dialectical philosophy with all these abilities at one's disposal.

JOHN F. HENNING INSTITUTE

The Department of Philosophy hosts the John F. Henning Institute, a center for the study of Catholic social thought, with special emphasis on the question of human work and its centrality to the common good. Students are invited to take part in the institute's program of academic conferences and lectures, publications and seminars.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

LOWER DIVISION

Philosophy 10 or 11 is required of all students.

UPPER DIVISION

The major in philosophy requires eight upper-division courses. The **130–131** and **135–136** sequences are required of all majors. In addition, all majors elect at least one course from **Philosophical Topics: 108, 109, 110, 111, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 133, 134**, and from **Authors/Schools: 160, 170, 172, 174, 176, 178**, and elect one further course from either category or undertake an approved **197 Special Study** or **199 Honors course**. In the senior year, candidates for the degree undertake an approved **196/198 Senior Thesis**.

Majors planning graduate study are advised to take French or German (for study in modern philosophy), Latin (for study in medieval philosophy), or Greek and Latin (for study in classical philosophy).

MINOR REQUIREMENTS

The minor in philosophy requires one lower- (**10** or **11**), and four upper-division courses (the **130–131** sequence or the **135–136** sequence, and one course from each of the categories, Philosophical Topics and Authors/Schools).

PREREQUISITE GRADE

Any course listed in this department with a prerequisite assumes a grade of C– or better in the prerequisite course.

C O U R S E S

LOWER DIVISION

5 Practical Logic

A course in the analysis and evaluation of everyday arguments. Recognition of patterns of argumentation, fallacies and ambiguities in English is stressed. This course aims primarily at refining and disciplining the student's natural ability to think critically. May not be counted for major credit.

10 Plato and Philosophical Inquiry

Study of Plato's *Republic* or of selected Platonic Dialogues with a view to such questions as: What is philosophy? What is the act of philosophical inquiry? What makes for a philosophical question, or for a philosophical answer? *Satisfies Common Good of the Core Curriculum.*

11 Aristotle and Philosophical Method

Study of selected texts of Aristotle with a view to such questions as: What are the objects and associated methods of philosophical inquiry? Are there distinct kinds or divisions of philosophy? In what sense or senses may philosophy qualify as science? *Satisfies Common Good of the Core Curriculum.*

UPPER DIVISION

PHILOSOPHICAL TOPICS

110 Philosophy of Religion

A phenomenological study of man that seeks to discover the essential structure of the human phenomenon of religion through its various manifestations. Consideration is given to the ultimate meaning of human existence and those common principles rooted in man that give rise to religion. The orientation of the course is philosophical and considers religion as involving both man and God. *Satisfies Theological Understanding (Explorations) of the Core Curriculum.*

111 Philosophy of Art

An analysis of doing and making, of truth, good, beauty, the visible and invisible, of figure and finality, as these reveal the intellectual and spiritual universes disclosed by painters, sculptors, poets, etc. *Satisfies Artistic Understanding (Analysis) of the Core Curriculum.*

113 Contemporary Problems in Ethics

A study of the ethical aspects of such contemporary problems as personal freedom, personal rights, civil disobedience and situation ethics.

114 Philosophy of Law

A study of the philosophy of law from Sophocles' *Antigone* through the great thinkers of the Middle Ages, giving particular attention to the notion of natural law of Thomas Aquinas.

115 Modern Legal Philosophy

The philosophy of law from Thomas Hobbes and John Locke to Marxism and contemporary legal positivism.

116 Political Philosophy

An investigation of the philosophical development of the notion of the “state;” “man’s relationship to the state;” and “forms of government.”

117 Philosophy of Nature

Raises the question of the possibility of a knowledge of nature that is independent of the quantification and mathematical methods of the “physical” sciences.

118 Theory of Knowledge

A study of the human approach to the nature of being, through an analysis of the works of Sartre, Descartes, Kant, Hegel, Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas. Particular emphasis on the philosophical method and the practice of reflection.

130–131 Ethics

An investigation of the difference between good and evil and between virtue and vice; of the relationship of virtue to choice, to knowledge, to power, to pleasure, to happiness; of the relationship of the human person to God, to nature, to society; of the relationship of responsibility to freedom and necessity. Texts (130) by Plato and Aristotle, the Bible, and Aquinas and (131) by Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Hegel, Kant and Nietzsche. Philosophy 130 is prerequisite to 131. *Satisfies Theological Understanding (Explorations) and Common Good of the Core Curriculum.*

133 The Art of Logic

A study of classical logic with reference to primary texts. Logic is approached as the art of attending to and refining the acts of the discursive intellect—definition, predication, and argument (reasoning—in its coming to know). Among the major topics considered: signification, categories, predicates, categorical and complex propositions, syllogistic, induction, formal and informal fallacies.

135–136 Metaphysics

A study, through close reading, discussing and writing, of “metaphysical” texts of (135) Plato and Aristotle (and, through them, of Parmenides and Heraclitus); and (136) of Thomas Aquinas and Hegel (with some attention, as time permits and inclination prompts, to texts of one or more of the following: Descartes, Kant, Wittgenstein, Heidegger). Philosophy 135 is prerequisite to 136.

AUTHORS AND SCHOOLS

160 A Critical Reading of the Principal Works of a Single Major Author or School of Philosophy

Such philosophers will be chosen as Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Descartes, Hume, Kant, Hegel and Heidegger. A “school” of philosophy, e.g., Empiricism, Rationalism, Idealism, is offered from time to time. May be repeated for credit as content varies.

170 Contemporary Philosophy

A study of a major philosopher or “school” of the contemporary period. Course may be repeated for credit as content varies.

172 Existentialism

Readings and discussions of some of the principal existential philosophers of the Continent, such as Kierkegaard, Camus, Sartre and Heidegger.

174 Greek Philosophy

A study of the full range of Greek philosophical thought from its pre-Socratic origins to its Neoplatonic conclusion. Platonic, Aristotelian, Cynic, Sceptic, Stoic and Epicurean Schools are examined through their texts, in historical context and evolution.

176 Medieval Philosophers

A consideration of the metaphysical and world view of major philosophers of the medieval period such as Saint Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. Course may be repeated for credit as content varies.

178 Renaissance Philosophers

A survey of major thinkers and artists from early 14th century to 16th century. The concern will be with questions of God, man and the world, and the contrast of the world of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the modern world.

196 Senior Thesis / 198 Senior Thesis — Honors

Candidates for the degree arrange, in the fall or spring of the senior year, a program of reading and research on a topic in modern/contemporary philosophy under a department director, and compose a lengthy senior thesis, which is presented publicly at a departmental meeting. Directions for proposing the thesis and a catalog of library resources are available from the chair.

197 Special Study

An independent study or research course for students whose needs are not met by the regular course offerings of the department. *Permission of the department chair and instructor required.*

199 Special Study — Honors

An independent study or research course for upper-division majors with a B average in philosophy. *Permission of the department chair and instructor required.*